DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 949 CE 080 411

AUTHOR	Shah, S. Y.
TITLE	Professionalisation of Indian Adult Education.
PUB DATE	1998-02-00
NOTE	10p.; Paper presented at the Asia Regional Literacy Forum (2nd, New Delhi, India, February 9-13, 1998). Later published in University News: A Weekly Chronicle of Higher Education & Research (October 19, 1998).
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.literacyonline.org/products/ili/webdocs/shah.html .
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Educators; Adult Literacy; Developing Nations; *Educational Needs; *Faculty Development; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Independent Study; Literacy Education; Program Development; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	*India; *Professionalization of Teaching

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the following aspect of the professionalization of adult education in India: professional training of adult educators. It first defines professionalization and then discusses the following essential prerequisite for that process: the development of a well-designed professional training program with adequate institutional backing, certification procedures, and code of practice. Several training needs for adult educators are examined, and the paper advocates for the training needs of senior adult educators. Following a short discussion of the limitations of the university system for training adult educators, the paper suggests the development of a professional program of training, beginning with an assessment of the requirements, interests, and academic backgrounds of all the personnel associated with the program. It then recommends the development of modules--independent units of study with specific objectives, contents, reading materials, and educational technology--to be used for independent study or training of adult educators. Recommendations are made for systemic changes in the university system to facilitate improved training for adult educators in India. (KC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 443 949

Professionalisation of Indian Adult Education

by

Dr. S. Y. Shah

2nd Asia Regional Literacy Forum

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

S.Y. Shah

CE 080 411

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LITERACY ONLINE
▶ PAPERS FROM THE 2ND ASIA REGIONAL LITERACY FORUM

Professionalisation of Indian Adult Education

Dr. S. Y. Shah

The horizon of adult education is widely expanding in the national scenario during the last two decades. Of the various factors which have influenced its development, the launching of National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) in 1978 and the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988 have been greatly responsible for catapulting adult education into a national programme of high priority and prominance besides ensuring it committed policy support and liberal grants from the Government of India. Today, several types of adult education activities viz; Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC), post literacy and continuing education programmes and experimental projects like Mahila Samakhya are being implemented in different parts of India by official agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and educational institutions. The operationalisation of these diverse programmes have not only generated a variety of professional literature ranging from literacy primers, post literacy materials, training manuals, evaluation reports, research studies and innumerable articles but also led to the expansion of training programmes.

Besides the systematic strategies evolved by the NLM towards developing the administrative and academic infrastructure at national, state and district levels and the University Grants Commission's (UGC) support to the establishment of 92 University Departments of Adult Continuing Education have played an important role in strengthening the professional base of adult education in the country. Yet, adult education in India remains merely a programme and is not recognised as a profession.1 Unlike in other developed countries where it has emerged as a "semi profession"2 or a "profession in transition"3; in India it has not yet carved a niche among the important professions. Unlike lawyers, doctors, engineers and social workers, the majority of practitioners of adult education do not have a homogeneous professional background. No certification or examinations are required to become adult educators. Due to the voluntary nature of programme, adult education as a profession is neither well established nor well understood. The majority of adult educators are hardly recognised as the professionals.4 In fact, the process of professionalisation of Indian adult education has hardly begun. There may be several reasons why adult education in India remains outside the purview of professionalisation. The scope of this paper is limited to the study of only one aspect of professionalisation-professional training. What are the limitations of current training programmes? How to professionalise the training system in Indian adult education?

Professionalisation - A Definition

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

There are several aspects of professionalisation of adult education. Broadly, it includes all those "elements which have placed emphasis on providing adult education with a sound theoretical base, have emphasised research and the application of scientific standards to methods, materials and the organisation of the field and have promoted the need for professional training and staffing".5 Professionalisation is a long process by which an occupation succeeds over a period of time in meeting the criteria of a professional gamut. It includes an enhancement of status and professionality of knowledge and skills involved in the professional practice. While some writers e.g. Elsdon, Mee, and Wiltshire consider adult education as a profession, others like Peter Jarvis, Colin Griffin categorise it as a `semi profession' which is characterised by "no firm theoretical base, no, monopoly of exclusive skills or special area of competence or rules to guide practice, less specialization than occupations generally regarded as professions and control exercised by non-professionals".6 In this connection it would be helpful to differentiate between professionalization and professionalism. The term professionalism describes a combination of serious commitment to the task at hand, competence, and a measure of self-directedness with a high concern for exclusive self-interest.7 Professionalisation is a process of change in the direction of the ideal type; and as occupations professionalise, they undergo a sequence of structural changes involving the establishment of training institutions, formation of professional organizations and mastery of theoretical knowledge etc. As Peter Jarvis observes, the growth in training part-time and full time adult educators may help to develop a body of knowledge which is a fundamental prerequisite for any occupation to gain professional status.8

Lacunae in the Training

An essential prerequisite for the professionalisation of adult education is the development of a well designed professional training programme with adequate institutional backing, certification procedures and code of practice. Although the training formed an integral part of adult education programmes in India during 1950's and 1960's; it had no long term perspective; with the termination of adult education programme, the training also ceased. It was only after the launching of NAEP that serious attention was paid by the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE) to streamline and strengthen the training of adult education. A training manual was developed by the DAE with the help of British experts.9 Since then, a number of training packages have been evolved by the DAE, UGC and NGO's. Those manuals especially the Learning for participation: An Approach to Training in Adult Education, Training Manual For Adult Education Functionaries, Towards Shared Learning and Khilti Kaliyan have been widely used in different parts of India during the last decade. After the emergence of the TLCs since 1990s, district specific training modules have been designed by the Zilla Sakhsharta Samitis. Notwithstanding the recognition of training as an important component of adult education programmes and organisation of a series of training programmes by national, state and regional organisations, training remains as a weak link. Several evaluation reports commissioned by the DAE, NLM, UGC, and NGOs during 1980's and 1990's have identified a number of drawbacks in training.10

According to them, the main focus of training was confined to imparting certain

operational skills related to the organisational, administrative and financial aspects of the field level programmes. Besides, the coverage of the academic component of the training programmes was inadequate. The duration of most of the training programmes were too inadequate and had no follow up provisions. They were generally organised in an adhoc manner and there was no long term perspective. Keeping in view the magnitude of the task, the training programme covered only a small fraction of functionaries presumably due to the lack of infrastructure facilities. During 1976-1988, the DAE could organise only 45 programmes covering 1288 participants.11

One of the major weaknesses of the training packages of adult education has been the inadequate importance given to the training of trainers.12 The strengthening of this aspect has become all the more significant due to the dearth of professional literature13 and researches in the field. Of the sixty five doctoral dissertations in the field of adult education undertaken during 1946-88 only five have focussed on training14 and of the 56 evaluation studies conducted on the different aspects of NAEP, none have exclusively examined the training aspect, though this has been covered in some studies. While a good deal of literature on training of trainers has been brought out by the International Council for Adult Education, UNESCO and certain universities, little efforts has been made by the UGC or DAE to adopt or adapt such training packages to meet the requirements of the Indian adult educators.

If the adult education programme is to be successful then there is a need for identifying the potential master trainers in different universities and organisations with genuine aptitude and necessary professional competence. It would be detrimental to assume that all adult educators would be successful trainers as well. A serious effort should be made to ascertain the interest of the adult educators in training through a well designed questionnaire. Training should be seen as a specialised job and should be assigned to genuinely interested persons who may be encouraged to develop their networking for better interaction and further improvement of training as a professional programme.

Besides, there seems to be a total neglect of the training needs of senior level personnel about whom it is often assumed that they possess the academic and technical expertise required to plan and manage adult education programmes whereas in reality most of them seem to lack such competencies. Although most of them invariably pick up the basic knowledge and some understanding of the programme through the study of policy guidelines, deliberations of meetings, visits to field, interactions with project staff and manage to discharge their functions; in the absence of a well designed professional development programme, those who are interested in augmenting their professional expertise, feel handicapped. While there are several avenues for the professional development in other fields, there is none at hand for the adult educators in India.

However, some attempts have been made to rectify these drawbacks when a six-week orientation programme was jointly organised by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, Directorate of Adult Education and Jawaharlal Nehru University during 1990-91. Although the programme had a wide coverage of about 80 senior level participants from Government, NGOs and universities with a strong academic appeal and was well commended, subsequently the programme was not

encouraged. The newly set up National Institute of Adult Education, although, principally had a mandate to cater to training and human resource development with an earmarked fund of Rs. 1 lakh for "long term institutional planning' during 92-93 could not take up the task due to the uncertainty of the future of the Institute.

Limitations of University System

The university system in India provides a little scope for the professional development of adult educators in the form of a nine-month Post-Graduate Diploma in Adult Education, besides the regular courses ranging from M.A. (Andragogy), M.Phil and the Ph.D in adult education. The number of University departments offering these courses are few, viz., Madras, S.V., Andhra, Delhi, Kurukshetra, Rajasthan, Jadavpur, Kerala, Shivaji and their intake capacity is also limited. In fact they are pre-service programmes whose main clientele is the fresh post-graduates though, at times, a few experienced adult educators also register for the Ph.D in universities. A review of the curriculum of different adult education courses offered by the Indian universities show that they do not focus on the current policies, programmes and problems of adult education in India and in other countries and has little relevance to the needs of inservice personnel. In fact, the majority of inservice personnel have little professional knowledge or expertise since the Indian university system has been extremely slow in designing suitable professional courses which could create the required manpower at a faster pace. While the UGC has set up Academic Staff Colleges for the professional development of teachers in several disciplines, there are no such provisions for the university adult educators. One of the factors responsible for the slow development of adult education as a profession in India may be obviously traced to the absence of a well designed professional development programme for the inservice and preservice personnel.

Towards a Professional Programme of Training

It seems that the national policy planners had been conceiving the adult education as a short-term activity of the Departments of Education, Women and Social Welfare and hence consider that short duration training courses would be sufficient to create adequate manpower for the total implementation of the adult education programmes. While such courses may equip them to discharge minimum functions, it may be inadequate to prepare the professionally competent manpower who can exactly meet the academic and technical challenges of a vast and expanding domain like adult education. Such ill equipped persons cannot be expected to make significant contribution to the development of adult education as a distinct field of practice and discipline of study. In fact, it may be argued that a suitably designed professional development programme for the adult educators would be the spring board for the emergence of well respected professionals.

Unlike in the developed countries, the central focus of adult education in India has been on the basic literacy-presumably due to the magnitude of the problem here. Hence, training in adult education programme primarily aims at imparting certain specific competencies connected with the transaction of literacy curriculum, teaching-learning techniques, evaluation methods and supervision. While these competencies might have enabled most of the trainees to discharge the minimum functions, in the case of few they may be quite inadequate to satisfy their newly

aroused interest in adult education as a field. For such keenly interested personnel, there are no avenues for upgrading their knowledge. After the successful completion of literacy campaigns, there has been little follow up of the personnel trained. Since the scope of adult education extends from basic literacy to life long learning, the training programmes for the adult educators need to be broadly conceptualized as a long term activity. If there are further avenues for those who look for upgradation after short-term training, through a series of professional programmes, then in course of time, a new category of adult education professionals may emerge with adequate professional knowledge and competence. Since TLCs have opened up a vast opportunity to the people to participate in literacy work, it is highly essential to pool together and consolidate their interests and rudimentary knowledge acquired during their participation in the literacy campaigns. If such avenues are opened then the professional base of adult education can be enlarged and strengthened. Otherwise, the embryonic practitioners (with little professional knowledge and competency) will outnumber the qualified professionals. Such a situation may lead to degrade the status of the profession, eventually the adult education may not attract the best talents. Hence the training in adult education during the Ninth Plan needs to be strictly conceived as professional development programme, with clearly demarcated grades. The need for developing a comprehensive training strategy and appropriate training modules by the DAE have been highlighted in the report of the Working Group on Adult Education for the Ninth Plan.15 However, such a massive task is a team work involving all the national level academic organisations like the Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Institute of Adult Education and other key institutions.

The process of strengthening the professional base of adult education should start with an assessment of the total requirements, interests and academic backgrounds of all the personnel associated with the programme. Broadly, there are three categories of personnel in adult education, viz., (i) Front-liners - instructors and supervisors; (ii) Programme planners and Directors - officials of Zilla Saksharata Samities, District and State Resource Centres, State and National Literacy Missions, and (iii) Professionals. While there may be considerable variation regarding the nature of professional competencies required by these three categories, the proposed professional development programme should be designed in a graded manner so that the first two categories can merge into the professionals in course of time through the study of a series of graded modules.

Each module may be developed as an independent unit of study with specific objectives, contents, reading materials and interesting audio and video tapes with appropriate evaluation tools. Depending on the job specification, the different category of personnel should be free to select the relevant modules and acquire the competent knowledge either through self-directed study or in groups. Each module may be assigned with certain credit points so that the learners can be induced to accumulate credits over a period of time and qualify for the award of a Certificate or Diploma. By collaborating with accredited institutions the possibilities of awarding recognized Diplomas may be explored. The broadening the concept of training and incorporating accreditation can pave the way to the trainees for upward professional mobility, thereby raising the professional status of adult education.

With the expansion of adult education programmes in India, the changing

requirements of the field, and the decentralised approach to planning, there is a need to examine the role of State Resource Centres (SRC) which are actively involved in training. What is the current level of professional expertise at SRCs? Are they equipped to take up the new challenges? If not, how to strengthen them during the Ninth Plan? Should they continue as temporary Plan Schemes or develop as permanent professional institutions? If the scope of training has to be expanded on a long term basis, then the SRCs need to be strengthened and stabilized during the Ninth Plan. They should be developed into permanent institutions with well qualified staff. Their roles and functions need to be reviewed. Strategies may have to evolved to build appropriate number of institutions at national and regional levels. Besides these, special attention should be paid to the development of professional training and staffing of adult educators. Side by side, the university system may have to revise the current curriculum making it more relevant to the demands of the new millennium. Towards this transformation of Indian adult education, administrators, academicians and activists should take the lead.

Notes and References

1. There are several ways of defining and describing a profession. Almost all definitions include certain essential characteristics namely existence of a well recognised code of ethics and techniques of operation based upon general principles and adequate professional training.
For details see, A.A. Liveright, "The Nature and Aims of Adult Education as a field of graduate education" in Training Educators of Adults, Edited by Stephen Brookfield, London: Routledge, 1988, pp.51-53.

2. Peter Jarvis, Adult Continuing Education: Theory and Practice, London: Croom Helm, 1983, p.205.

3. A.A. Liveright, Loc.cit, p.53.

4. The term `professional' has atleast three meanings: one who receives emoluments for the performance of his or her occupational tasks; one who practices an occupation generally regarded as a profession; one who is an expert since he or she is master both of a specific branch of learning and of the skill to practice the occupation based upon it. For details see, Peter Jarves, Loc.cit, p.207.

5. G.Selman and J. Kulich, "Between Social Movement and Profession - A Historical Perspective on Canadian Adult Education", Studies in Adult Education, Vol.12, No.2, October 1980, p.109.

6. Peter Jarves, Loc.cit, pp.206-207.

7. For details see, Michael Collins, Adult Education as Vocation, London: Routledge: 1991, pp.86-87.

8. Peter Jarves, The Sociology of Adult and Continuing Education, London: Croom Helm, 1985, p.241.

9. See Training of Adult Education Functionaries, New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education, 1978.

10. For details see R.S. Mathur and S.V.S. Subramanyam, Issues and Approaches in the Training of Adult Education Functionaries: A Synthesis of Findings from Evaluation Report - Evaluation Monograph, New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education, 1985.

Report of the Review Committee on the National Adult Education Programme, New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1980.

University System and Extension As the Third Dimension: Report of the Review Committee Appointed by the University Grants Commission, New Delhi: UGC 1987.

Report of the National Workshop on Training Strategy Under Total Literacy Campaign, October 15-16, 1992, PRIA, New Delhi.

11. R. Gomez, "Training Activities of Directorate of Adult Education", New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education, 1985, (Mimeograph), p.2.

12. S.Y.Shah, "The Training of Adult Educators and the University System in India: Themes, Techniques and Issues", International Journal of University Adult, Education, Vol.XXIX, No.3, November 1990.

13. In an extensive bibliography on adult education during 1951-80, there are only 157 publication under the category of "Personnel and Training". There is hardly any literature on training of trainers. See Adult Education in India: A Bibliography, New Delhi: Directorate of Adult Education, 1981, pp.287-303.

14. The following doctoral dissertations have covered training aspects very extensively.

i. N.A. Ansari, "An Appraisal of the training programme for Social Education Workers in India", Ph.D. Education, Delhi University, 1970.

ii. J.S. Panwar, "Effects of Short Duration agriculture training on farmers learning", Ph.D. Education, Udaipur University, 1978.

iii. K. Karunakaran, "Identification of Factors to be tackled in an effective programme of non-formal education and training of farmers", Ph.D. Education, Kerala University, 1987.

iv. G.S.K. Nair, "Preparation of Training Programme for Non-Formal Education Workers in Kerala", Ph.D. Education, Kerala University, 1987.

v. Rajender Singh "Adult Education Training and Productivity", Ph.D. Education, Kurukshetra University, 1988.

Apart from these a number of dissertations on the evaluation of adult education

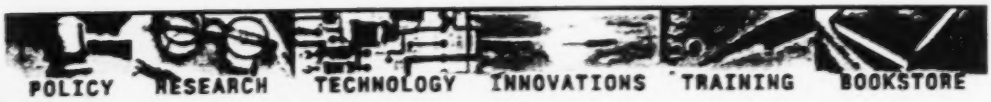
programme have also covered training to a limited extent. For details see S.Y. Shah (Ed.) A Source Book on Adult Education, New Delhi, Directorate of Adult Education, 1988, pp.249-257.

15. See, Report of the Working Group on Adult Education for the Formulation of Ninth Five Year Plan, New Delhi: Ministry of HRD, 1996, p.82.

Contact Info:

Dr. S.Y.Shah
Director
Adult Continuing Education and Extension Unit
School of Social Sciences-I
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067

Back to Table of Contents



Policy | Research | Technology | Innovations | Training | Bookstore | Home | Help | Site Map | About ILI | About NCAL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE